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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 027725

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE - DELIVER EARLY AM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: RH, UK

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO WASHINGTON STAR EDITORIAL
-
REF: STATE 025769

I. REFTEL CONVEYED TEXT OF JANUARY 3I WASHINGTON STAR EDITORIAL WHICH WAS PARTICULARLY HOSTILE TO CURRENT US POLICY TOWARD RHODESIA. AF HAS PREPARED FOLLOWING RESPONSE TO EDITORIAL. THIS DRAFT HAS NOT BEEN CLEARED WITH OTHER BUREAUS OR BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE SEVENTH FLOOR. THE DRAFT IS INTENDED TO BE OUTSPOKEN AND REALISTIC ABOUT THE SITUATION IN RHODESIA ON THE SUPPOSITION THAT ANYTHING MILDER WOULD BE INEFFECTIVE IN CHALLENGING THE VIEWS UNDERLYING THE STAR EDITORIAL. IF YOU APPROVE, RESPONSE WOULD BE SENT IN YOUR NAME.
2. WE ARE SENDING THE DRAFT TO YOU AS SOMETHING YOU MAY
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WISH TO WORK ON DURING YOUR RETURN TO WASHINGTON. YOU MAY, HOWEVER, PREFER A DIFFERENT APPROACH OR DETERMINE THAT, WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEGOTIATING EFFORT,IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO RESPOND PUBLICLY AT THIS TIME. OTHER OPPORTUNITIES SUCH AS YOUR FEBRUARY 9 ADDRESS TO THE FORTUNE 500 GROUP MAY PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR STATING OUR POSITION.

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3. BEGIN TEXT OF DRAFT RESPONSE:

TO THE EDITOR:

THE WASHINGTON STAR'S LEAD EDITORIAL OF JANUARY 3I IS A SCATHING INDICTMENT OF CURRENT U.S. POLICY TOWARD RHODESIA. IT ASSERTS THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WOULD REJECT THAT POLICY IF THEY WERE BETTER INFORMED OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE RHODESIAN SITUATION. LAMENTABLY, THE EDITORIAL DOES NOTHING TO INCREASE THE PUBLIC'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE CURRENT POLICY OR OF THE REALITIES OF THE RHODESIAN SCENE.

THE EDITORIAL IS BASED ON DISTORTED PREMISES. IT PRESENTS A PICTURE OF RHODESIA AS A FUNCTIONING BIRACIAL SOCIETY ON THE VERGE OF WORKING OUT A SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD BRING TO IT AN ENDURING PEACE, IF NOT FURTHER OBSTRUCTED BY PERFIDIOUS BRITONS AND MISTAKEN, MISLED AMERICANS NOW NEGOTIATING IN MALTA WITH THE "TERRORIST-GUERRILLA" LEADERS OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, JOSHUA NKOMO AND ROBERT MUGABE.

IF SUCH A SCENARIO WERE AN ACCURATE ONE, READERS OF THE STAR'S EDITORIAL AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AS A WHOLE WOULD INDEED HAVE CAUSE FOR ALARM. THEY COULD RIGHTLY AGREE WITH ITS IMPLICIT ASSUMPTION THAT SOMEHOW THE 20-30,000 CONFIDENTIAL

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BLACK RHODESIANS WHO HAVE LEFT THEIR COUNTRY TO JOIN THE GUERRILLA FORCES, NOT TO MENTION THE MANY TIMES THAT NUMBER OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO HAVE FLED THE COUNTRY AS REFUGEES TO LIVE IN GENERALLY SQUALID CONDITIONS IN SURROUNDING COUNTRIES, MUST BE SOME KIND OF AIMLESS DERELICTS WHO DERIVE ENJOYMENT FROM "THE RUTHLESS MURDER OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AND THE ELDERLY, MOSTLY BLACK".

THEY COULD RIGHTLY WONDER WHY THE U.S. AND THE REST OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY, NO NATION OF WHICH RECOGNIZES THE LEGITIMACY OF THE SMITH REGIME, IS SO CONCERNED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN RHODESIA IF IT IS SUCH A PARADISE OF RACIAL EQUALITY AND PROGRESS.

READERS COULD ALSO BE JUSTIFIABLY OUTRAGED IF AMERICAN POLICY WERE DESIGNED SOLELY TO APPEASE CERTAIN AFRICAN NATIONS, PREVENT AN IMMINENT SETTLEMENT, AND ENCOURAGE FURTHER BLOODSHED IN THE AREA. IF THIS WERE THE CASE, I WOULD BE OUTRAGED MYSELF. BUT IT IS CLEARLY NOT THE CASE AND THE STAR HAS DONE A DISSERVICE TO ITS READERS WHO HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ABOUT A SITUATION OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE TO THE UNITED STATES.

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THE FACTS ARE THESE:

-- THE RHODESIAN REGIME UNILATERALLY DECLARED ITS INDEPENDENCE IN 1965 AFTER REJECTING REPEATED BRITISH ATTEMPTS TO ENCOURAGE IT TO ADOPT POLICIES WHICH WOULD GRADUALLY INCREASE THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF RHODESIA'S AFRICANS WHO CONSTITUTE 96 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION.

-- SUBSEQUENT EFFORTS BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN THE INTERVENING I3 YEARS HAVE FOUNDERED ON THE WHITE REGIME'S UNWILLINGNESS TO GIVE A MEANINGFUL POLITICAL VOICE TO RHODESIA'S BLACK POPULATION. AT THE SAME TIME THE CONFIDENTIAL

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GROWING POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS OF THE BLACK MAJORITY LED IT TO DEMAND THAT BRITIAN SHOULD NOT GRANT INDEPENDENCE AND LEGITIMACY TO THE SMITH REGIME PRIOR TO THE ATTAINMENT OF MAJORITY RULE.

-- THE POLITICAL STALEMATE AND LACK OF PROGRESS INCREASED BLACK FRUSTRATION AND RESULTED IN A RESORT TO ARMS. THERE IS AN UGLY WAR GOING ON IN RHODESIA WHICH HAS SEEN THOUSANDS OF RHODESIANS, WHITE AND BLACK, LOSE THEIR LIVES AND MANY ATROCITIES COMMITTED BY BOTH SIDES. THE WAR CONTINUES TODAY AND OFFERS A TEMPTING OPPORTUNITY FOR FOREIGN INTERVENTION.

-- WHILE THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS TOWARD RACIAL EQUALITY IN RHODESIA RECENTLY, THE STEPS TAKEN BY THE SMITH GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN TENTATIVE ONES.RHODESIA REMAINS A SEGREGATED SOCIETY IN WHICH A FOUR PER CENT MINORITY OF WHITES MAINTAINS EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LIFE OF THE COUNTRY. HUNDREDS OF AFRICANS ARE IMPRISONED FOR THEIR POLITICAL VIEWS, SECRET TRIALS AND HANGINGS ARE COMMON EVENTS AND GOVERNMENT RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS HAS GREATLY WITHERED.

-- SINCE EARLY 1976 THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS CLOSELY COOPERATED WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN AN ACTIVE SEARCH FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT TO THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM.

-- THE ANGLO-AMERICAN SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS, PUBLISHED ON SEPTEMBER I, 1977 AFTER EXTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS WITH ALL THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES OFFER A COMPREHENSIVE, SENSIBLE AND FAIR PACKAGE WHICH WOULD RAPIDLY LEAD RHODESIA FROM MINORITY TO MAJORITY RULE.
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-- THE PROPOSALS RECOGNIZE THAT THE MUTUAL HOSTILITY AND SUSPICION ENGENDERED BY A LONG BATTLE FOR MAJORITY RULE ARE SUCH THAT A SETTLEMENT THAT HAS INTERNATIONAL

SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED TO ENSURE THAT THE TRANSITIONAL PROCESS WILL BE FAIRLY CONDUCTED IN SUCH A MANNER THAT EACH PHODESIAN POLITICAL FORCE RECOGNIZES THAT ITS INTEREST WILL NOT BE SUBJECT TO THE DICTATES OF OTHER GROUPS. THEREFORE, THE PROPOSALS SUGGEST THAT A BRITISH RESIDENT COMMISSIONER IMPARTIALLY ADMINISTER RHODESIA FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED SIX MONTHS DURING WHICH ALL PARTIES WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CAMPAIGN FREELY FOR ELECTION TO A NEW GOVERNMENT. THE NEW GOVERN-MENT WILL THEN ADMINISTER THE INDEPENDENT NATION ON THE BASIS OF A CONSTITUTION PREVIOUSLY AGREED UPON, WHICH WILL CONTAIN A BILL OF RIGHTS TO PROTECT THE BASIC RIGHTS OF ALL RHODESIANS, REGARDLESS OF RACE.

--IN OUR NEGOTIATING EFFORT IT HAS BEEN THE CONSISTENT POSITION OF BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM THAT ALL THE RECOGNIZED NATIONALIST LEADERS SHOULD HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE TRANSITIONAL PROCESS AND IN AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE, THE AFRICAN NAME FOR RHODESIA.

--IT IS IMPORTANT TO MEASURE ANY STEP TAKEN IN RELATION TO RHODESIA AGAINST THE ULTIMATE GOALS OF AN END TO BLOODSHED AND AN INDEPENDENT, MAJORITY RULED ZIMBABWE REACHED THROUGH A TRANSITIONAL PROCESS IN WHICH ALL PARTIES WOULD FEEL FREE TO PARTICIPATE WITHOUT FEAR OF INTIMIDATION OR FAVORITISM.

--THE TALKS WHICH HAVE BEEN GOING ON IN SALISBURY HAVE NOT SO FAR INCLUDED ALL OF THE PARTIES, NOR IS THERE ANY CLEAR INDICATION YET THAT THE RESULTS CAN MEET THE BASIC CONFIDENTIAL

REQUIREMENTS FOR AN ENDURING AND PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. TO SUGGEST THAT THE MALTA TALKS WERE INTENDED AS A SPOILING OPERATION, THEREFORE, OVERLOOKS THE IMPORTANT FACT THAT THEY ARE PART OF A CONTINUING PROCESS, BEGUN WELL BEFORE THE CURRENT TALKS IN SALISBURY, FOR THE PURPOSE OF WINNING BROADER ACCEPTANCE AND EVENTUAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAIR AND IMPARTIAL APPROACH SET FORTH IN THE ANGLO-

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AMERICAN PROPOSALS.

UNDOUBTEDLY, INDIVIDUALS OF GOOD FAITH CAN DEBATE THE MERITS OF OUR RHODESIAN POLICY. I BELIEVE THAT THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS OFFER THE BEST CHANCE FOR A RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT WHICH WILL PROVE FAIR TO ALL RHODESIANS. RATHER THAN ACTING AS ACCOMPLICES TO FURTHER BLOODSHED, AS THE STAR ASSERTS, WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PREVENT FURTHER TRAGEDY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. IT IS A DIFFICULT CHALLENGE, BUT ONE WHICH WE SHOULD NOT SEEK TO AVOID OR TO OBSCURE BY THE REPETITION OF GLIB AND INACCURATE GENERALITIES. END TEXT.

4. HAVE LEARNED SINCE FOREGOING TYPED THAT BRITISH EMBASSY IS SENDING A LETTER TO STAR WITH VERY SOLID QUOTES FROM OWEN'S LAST PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT ON SUBJECT. VANCE

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